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Annex "A," Subparagraph li,
Sociological Background

INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

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Intellectual and artistic expression is interpreted in this chapter to mean the communication of ideals and ideas through creative and academic writing, painting, the plastic arts, dancing, and music.

The bulk of the creative and academic writing of the East-China Region does not differ from that produced in China as a whole. The Chinese written language is the universal vehicle for official business and cultivated expression in all parts of China. In the last three decades, Shanghai, having more publishing houses and better international communication, vied with Peking as the nation's cultural center, until the Communists made Peking the nation's capital in 1949. Cities like Soochow, Nanking, Hangchow, Tsinan, Foochow, and Amoy of East China have been centers of higher learning. The new literary movement, although originating in Peking, also stirred these cities and Shanghai. The support from these cities gave the movement a national character. The identification of the bulk of the creative and academic writings of the East-China Region with that of the Chinese nation as a whole is particularly true today when the nation is ruled by an authoritarian and centralized government and when all cultural innovations emanate from Peking.

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532 The Chinese, especially the Chinese Com-
538 munists, often speak of literature and the arts as one. In the Communists' policy statements, what pertains to literature also pertains to the other arts. Therefore, as far as the theory and policy of the arts are concerned, no separate treatment is necessary.

532 In less sophisticated folk literature and
538 folk art, however, East China exhibits some
184 unique regional characteristics. But even in this respect, the East-China Region is by no means an integrated whole: Shantung is more closely related to the North China tradition, and is oriented toward Hopei rather than toward the provinces in the south; Fukien has South China characteristics not shared by other provinces in the region. Furthermore, in the mountains of southern Chekiang and western Fukien there are minority groups who have forms of intellectual and artistic expressions unlike those of the Han Chinese.

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LITERARY ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNIST CHINA

814 The reform of literature and art (wen-i cheng-feng) at Yenan in 1942[1] made the practice

1. Mao Tse-tung's speeches at the Party School in Yenan in February and at the Yenan Literary and Art Circles' meeting in May 1942 established the "line" of literature and art endorsed by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party which has since been upheld as the creed of writers and artists in Communist

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536 It should be mentioned that the Communists have elevated the social position of actors and actresses from that of "entertainer" to that of "artist." Actors and actresses have their own organizations in the capital and are invited to take part "under the leadership of the Party" in the deliberation of new policies pertaining to their profession.

III. ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

A. Painting and the Plastic Arts

• 537 Painting and the plastic arts are largely utilitarian in China today. The utilitarian spirit puts them in the realm of either propaganda or craftsmanship. As propaganda, they have become extremely derivative and stereotyped; as craftsmanship, they utilize local characteristics and traditional skills and sometimes are unrestrainedly florid and pretentious. Chinese brush paintings, woodcuts, oil paintings, pencil sketches, water colors, sculpture, ceramic figures, wood-carvings, cartoons, and chalk drawings are entries in most of the art exhibitions. Among these categories, ceramic figures and wood-carvings represent local craftsmanship and are little influenced by Communist ideology. Other art forms have followed Communist policies and adopted Communist slogans as themes. Woodcuts, sculptures, and water colors seem to have been more easily adapted to the new themes than oil paintings and the traditional Chinese brush

•532 paintings. The oil paintings done by Chinese artists lack imagination in composition; at their best, they are only photographic depictions of political activities. Traditional brush-painting technique is at its best in landscape paintings and in depicting rural life and is ill-adapted to the illustration of modern people and their activities. No prominent artists in oil or water color have emerged under the Communist regime.

Under the general principle, "Accept the heritage of the world," the Chinese Communists have commemorted Western artists like Rembrandt and Leonardo da Vinci and printed reproductions of Western art (the Mona Lisa, for example) in literary and art journals.

B. Woodcuts

The woodcut, a traditional art in China, is used to adorn story books. Lu Hsün (Chou Shu-jen) was the first to renew popular interest in this art. Woodcuts became popular in Yenan during the war against Japan because they did not require elaborate equipment. Many people remember the lively woodcuts of the Liberated Areas, which showed the influence of the West. Woodcuts are popular in Communist China. There is a tendency to incorporate the traditional Chinese woodcut style in the illustration of Communist themes. One also

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finds elaborate woodcuts in multiple colors, the technique of which antedates the Yenan period. In recent woodcuts, rural life is more effectively presented than scenes depicting blast furnaces or anti-U.S. activities.

C. New Year's Pictures (Nien-hua)

In Chinese households not influenced by the West, a new picture is hung or pasted on the wall on New Year's Eve to assure a prosperous and peaceful year ahead. Such pictures are called nien-hua. They are exploited by the Communists as a means to secure the people's consent and support for their regime. The traditional theme of superstitious propitation to the gods has been transmogrified to one of glorification of Mao Tse-tung for bringing happiness and prosperity to the people, or of the Long March of the Chinese Communists, the distribution of land certificates after the land reform, the woman train-conductor, or the "great meeting of Stalin and Mao Tse-tung."[21]

The Communists have been boasting of a tremendous sale of the "new" nien-hua during the last few years. The production and printing of the new nien-hua are now done

21. People's Pictorial, February 1951.

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532 entirely by Communist publishing houses, and the Chinese people have no way of buying the traditional ones. The aesthetic value of the nien-hua is practically nil, but it blends together so well the traditional customs, beliefs, and sayings of the people that the messages it conveys are easily understood and often accepted.

D. Comic strips (Lien-huan t'u-hua)

The Chinese comic strip is neither literature nor art, but it borrows a little from both to enable the barely literate to be educated and entertained with stories. The Communists, knowing the popularity of comic strips among children, women, and the uneducated, have contrived to use them as tools with which to teach "patriotism" sanitation, and health to the masses. Earlier comic strips are looked upon as "feudalistic" and superstitious and have been replaced by "new, healthy, and educational ones." The new comic strips, created by artists recruited and guided by the Communists, are available at street corners and in factories, villages, armies, and schools.

The Communists claim that the sale of comic strips is increasing daily. The Lien-ho Bookstore in Shanghai, which handles the new comic strips, reported the sale of more than 600,000 copies in January 1951, and more than one million copies in the following April. The comic strip periodical Lien-huan Hua-pao is reported to have a circulation of 400,000 copies

532 every issue.

The most representative and most publicized new comic strip is The Letter with a Chicken Feather,[22] which uses 243 pictures to "give Chinese children a patriotic education." The story concerns a young boy who, after receiving a Communist education, successfully fulfilled the "heroic" task of delivering an important message to anti-Japanese guerrilla force. It is claimed that more than 58,000 copies of The Letter with a Chicken Feather have been sold.

E. Dance

535 China as a whole does not have any distinctive form of dancing, although yang-ko is sometimes so considered. Combining singing and dancing, it is derived from the song pattern of peasants who sing in groups in an antiphonal manner while working in the rice-fields. The dance steps follow a simple pattern -- two steps forward and one step backward -- resembling the movement of the peasants as they work in the fields. In village festivals, the yang-ko is sometimes performed, but it became truly popular only after the reform of literature and art in 1942, when the Communist used the dance to

22. It was a traditional practice to include a chicken feather with an urgent message, to signify the letter's importance and the need for safekeeping.